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THE PSYCHOLOGIC ASPECT OF FREE-ASSOCIATION

BY THEODORE SCHROEDER

Psychoanalytic therapeutics with its technique for dream interpretation consists largely in the use of "free associations," with dream factors. This and the resultant theory of a "latent content" for dreams are often the points of attack for those who still have a sceptical attitude toward psychoanalysis. Such critics assert that the free-association products and their predominant sexual content are the product of suggestions from the analyst. These suggestions, together with the organic condition of the dreamer, are said to explain fully all the sexuality in the "manifest content" of the dream and in the erroneously alleged and non-existent latent content of dreams. For the psychanalyst such explanations seem utterly to miss the psychogenetic viewpoint. To justify the latter and to clarify the psychologic theory of dreams and of free associations is the purpose of this essay.

To eliminate the possibility of suggestion by a second party I must supply an illustration of free associations which developed when practically no possibility of such suggestions existed. Manifestly then these associations must be such as have come into consciousness when no second person was present, and when no psychoanalysis is in progress. This seems to limit me to some of my own personal associations, and their underlying experiences. Fortunately I recently had an exceptionally good experience for this purpose. For the sake of clearing up the situation, I will expose myself to the public with that frankness which is characteristic of the dealings of the patient with his psychanalyst. To this end I am going to tell the story of an unpremeditated and unexpected group of associated words, and their elaboration by further associations. Around this will come some discussion of psychologic theory.

AN UNDESIGNED SPONTANEOUS ASSOCIATION

At the time of the occurrence about to be related, over three years had elapsed since I enjoyed professional associations with my psychanalyst. In the meantime I had seen

him but once. This was over a year before the occurrence now to be related. Then I saw him for only about an hour and had no conversation with him about my personal psychology. I call attention to this as showing just how improbable would be the assumption of any efficient immediate suggestion from him as a determinant of the precise character of the following associations and their antecedent underlying events.

Early one morning I was sitting in my library alone. I had before me an attempt to imitate my handwriting as revealed in my signature. The penmanship was that of a woman, my literary assistant. My fancy ran back to my adolescent period when I had indulged in some practice to insure a uniform and well rounded signature. I am now 54 years of age and at the time now in question I was not conscious of the femininity of the person whose "forgery" I was inspecting, or of any influence of that femininity upon my subsequent thought-associations. Neither was I, at the time of recording the associations presently to be mentioned, conscious that my own adolescent practice toward perfecting my signature was in part motivated by a desire to make myself more attractive in the estimation of girls with whom I might have correspondence.

As I recurred to my adolescent effort toward becoming a more proficient penman, I picked up a penholder and quite thoughtlessly I began to write. On recovering from my reverie, I found that I had written these words: *Abercrombie & Co. — Calcutta — Iroquoi — Magruder — Possum — Calcimine — Smart Set — Hangman — Nice — Lice — Porcelain*. A little later I was struck by the thought that without premeditation or any conscious design toward that end, I had produced an unusual group of words. What could have brought them together? My psychologic curiosity was stimulated to inquire what could have been the determinants of these apparently incongruous choices, and of their co-hering. Treating these words as symbols of things objective to my own mental state, no element of unification was apparent. Perhaps as symbols of my mental states it might be otherwise.

Obviously these words were all "free associations" with the penmanship of a woman, in whom I must confess having had an erotic interest.

In fancy I can already see some anti-analyst rise up to smite me. "Listen to a psychic-determinist talking about

'free association,' " I hear him shout in triumph. If this is a quarrel about the meaning or the most consistent use of words then the critic has the best of me. Such criticism may give him joy through a consciousness of dialectic superiority and will be very satisfying to some opponents of psychoanalysts. However, such criticism will not give even the slightest aid to an understanding of my meaning or to psychology theory. One who was concerned about understanding the concept that I was trying to describe, more than about a quarrel concerning my consistency or choice of words, would act otherwise. Such a person might discover that I did not really mean that these associations were "free" in the sense of the free-will theory. On the contrary, I was and am predisposed to believe that there is an absolute but then yet unknown determinism in every factor of that association. What a determinist means by "free association" is a freedom from *conscious* restraint against giving expression to whatever comes into one's consciousness. He does not mean that either in its coming or in its essence there is anything free from the determinism of antecedent experiences nor that the desire to express or withhold it is free from the influence of our own psychological past.

PSYCHIC FACTOR OF UNIFICATION

Relying on my past experience in such matters I might tentatively say that it is impossible for the woman's penmanship to stimulate the writing of this group of seemingly incoherent words, unless there was some element of unification for them within my own psyche, produced there by my own past. Indeed it is doubtful if it is worth while to attempt any scientific investigation of the psyche except for the discovery of more of the factors in an absolute determinism, or on the assumption that there is such a completely determined causation, working under some approximation to uniform behavior, depending upon how near we can approach an exact duplication of the conditioning factors.

Those who have an aversion to the uncovering of their own past, as that may be still operating in their own subconscious impulses, will be content with pointing to the organic conditions and the objective contributions to the final result, and will insist that these supply an adequate explanation. For them, obviously the woman's handwriting and the fact that I am a male are the responsible stimulant for these words. These with their necessary ramifications are the only causative factors that need to be considered. "We have found

that much of what has been attributed to *mythical* psychological 'complexes' can be definitely referred to specific organic conditions," writes Prof. C. Rahn, (Psychol. Bulletin, Feb. 1918, v. 15, p. 40.) For many of us this seems to miss the more essential psychologic viewpoint. When I suggest that the woman's handwriting was only the objective stimulus to some complexes of mine, and that the actual words which came forth were the products of a choice subconsciously determined by my own past, they may protest as does another professional critic. He says: "This seems to turn things topsy turvy, since what A arouses is conceived as arousing A." (Prof. Woodworth in: Journal of Abnormal Psychology. 12 [No. 3]; Aug. 1917.)

So long as you see the woman's penmanship or my organic conditions as the only causal factors, you are dealing only with the more obvious and least psychologic aspects of the problem. Psychologically, the more important question is that which inquires: From my past life, what is the personal psychic contribution toward determining the choice of *these special words* in preference to all other words, as my response to the stimulus of this woman's handwriting? Probably no other person on earth would have made just that same response to this same stimulus. Try it out experimentally if you have doubts. The discovery of the personal contribution from my own past life, as a determinant of *the precise character of this response* to this objective stimulus, that is the special function of the psychoanalyst. Let us restate this psychologic problem as it may be presented by the psyche of some of the more vehement opponents of psychoanalysis. The question then would be this: What is there in their own past lives and submerged complexes which operates as their subjective contribution to the resultant emotional aversion which some of them manifest, when stimulated by psychoanalytic theory? Elsewhere I have illustrated a method for unraveling this mystery by the use of their own literary output.¹

Those who have not faced themselves and their own past, as that is operating subconsciously in the present, or who have not faced all that in such a manner as is usual in the psychoanalytic process, must of necessity feel with some critics that: "It is contrary to the general fact that shifts of thought are the rule, so that you tend to get quite away from

¹ See: A Psychologic Study of Judicial Opinion. *California Law Review*, Jan. 1918. For a different technique see: Freud's Leonardo da Vinci. Also Kemp's, Charles Darwin, *Psychoanalytic Review*, Apr. 1918; vol. 5, pp. 151-192.

the context of your starting point in the course of a reverie or other free-association process. . . . and it is contrary to the fact of multiple possibilities of associative reaction. Thought may jump hither or yon. It is far removed from the fixed linkage of stimulus and a response characteristic of the simple reflexes . . . shifting of the topic is as characteristic of uncontrolled thinking as *to make it utterly impossible* to accept the fundamental proposition on which the Freudian conclusion as to the latent content of dreams etc., are supposed to be based." (Prof. Woodworth in *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*. 12 [No. 3]; 178; Aug. 1917.)

For many this seems to be very obviously true. Perhaps it would seem less true if they had ever given an aggressive co-operation in submitting themselves to a thorough psychanalysis with the aid of an efficient expert. This might give an enlarged view of psychic causation, of mental mechanisms and of psychic determinism, such as would make it impossible for such a person ever again to pen such a statement, "There was a time when the quoted words might have appealed to me. Since I have come to a better understanding of the behavior of my own psyche, such statements have lost their appeal. This is so because now I have learned to look within *as well as without* for a more complete explanation of the shifts of thought and for the linkage of responses to stimulus.

RETURNING TO THE ASSOCIATIONS

Now I must return to my word-associations, and show why it seems to me that an application to the psyche of a more penetrating psychologic insight used for the discovery of the linkage between stimulus and response, would make some critics less ready to deny the existence of a very fixed linkage of thoughts which are not consciously controlled. Now let me return to my associations.

Upon discovering that I had put forth an unusual combination of words, I first tried to find some objective connection between the words themselves, or between the objective things which these words usually symbolize. I failed in this undertaking. Had I not previously received some psychoanalytic discipline, I might have stopped my investigation. If I had never been tempted to look for the thoughts and feelings *within me* which these words also symbolize, I would have neglected the more psychologic aspect of my problem. Had I failed to do that I might never have found the elements of unification in these word-associations. Then I would doubtless have agreed with the critics above quoted.

Under such neglect on my part, I would never have discovered the latent psychologic import of the choices which were unconsciously, yet effectively, expressed in these word-associations. To find the subjective import and elements of unification of my unique group of words, I resorted to further separate associations with each word. Relying upon past experience, I assumed that each of these words must be the centre of a complex, united by some common underlying feeling tone, with the other complexes symbolized by each of the remaining words, and by the stimulus which brought them into being.

The essays above quoted from had not been published then. Without that stimulus and as a mere matter of curiosity wholly unconnected with the present purposes or uses, I was prompted to concentrate my attention on separate words of this collection to see what images from my past would present themselves. I now remember that I did not follow the order in which the words were written and I do not now recall what order I did follow. But I can reproduce the pictures out of past experience which came into my mind, as the further association to each word in the group. These memories will now be reported. They will exhibit a subjective element of unification and of causation for the particular choices expressed in the above group of words, and I believe they will also illuminate the behavior of the psyche, so as to contribute something to the clarification of psychologic theory.

Abercrombie & Co. This first suggested a civil engineer named Abercrombie under whom I worked in New Mexico, when 18 or 19 years of age. Out of my brief association with him, only one incident concerning him sticks in my memory. We were living in movable camps, making a preliminary survey for a railroad. On returning to camp one evening after a whole day out, far in advance of the party, he told us of his experience with a Mexican woman. He went to her hut in quest of something to eat. He could not speak Spanish nor could she speak English. His first gestures being inefficient, he exhibited a coin to help the rubbing of his abdomen as a suggestion that he wanted to buy food. The woman promptly lay down on the floor and pulled up her dress. We boys in the party thought this a particularly good joke on the old man because of his extreme puritanism, for which the rest of us had little use. In my own case this was of course contemporaneous with the anxiety about the perfection of my penmanship and with the stormy period of pubescent readjustment. But whence came the "& Co.," at-

tached to the name. This did not develop until later, and I will leave its explanation until it is logically connected with another event.

Macedonia. In this connection there came to my mind a priest of some far Eastern cult whom I saw in Wisconsin, at about my 18th year. He lived in a tent, wore queer clothes, travelled from place to place without money or much apparent forethought and preached strange doctrines. At this time I have no independent memory that he came from Macedonia. But in the light of other experiences the association is some evidence that I then believed that he came from Macedonia.

His doctrines were of great interest to me then, although now I cannot remember what they were. At that time heretical doctrines had a great affect-value for me because my mother's protestantism had cost her ostracism from her catholic family. Furthermore my attachment to my mother I know had as early as my fifth year acquired an integration of sexual curiosity. That was my pre-adolescent sexuality, a forerunner of more conscious and more mature interest, incestuous in its real nature. This is one of the common facts of life that opponents of psychanalysis like to denounce very vigorously so they may better remain unconscious of it as having operated in themselves. By a familiar process of transference my infantile erotic interest in my mother attached itself to her heresy and later with enlarged understanding it expanded to a sympathy with heresy in general. Some other time I may portray the mechanism of the development of that influence through the years. Now it is enough to connect it with memory fixation in relation to the strange priest.

Calcutta. That is the present address of a woman whom I know. A few years ago she lived in a tent near my summer home. That was before I had submitted myself to an expert psychanalyst. Then I had only read some analytic literature. She was a literary worker and I tried to give her some needed help in unravelling some of her psychologic perplexities. We talked freely of her sexual life and I had entertained some sexual phantasies toward her. Also she had some remote resemblance to my mother in her outward appearance.

Now I come back to Abercrombie & Co. In this connection there came to me the thought that Abercrombie & Co., was a firm that dealt in sporting goods. I tried to verify this in a New York telephone book, and I found a firm of that

name who are tent makers. Then I remembered that some years before knowing the Calcutta woman I had purchased a water proof cover from this firm. This cover I intended to use for outdoor sleeping on the porch of a small building on the grounds where I spend my summers, which building is known as "The Wigwam." I now remembered also that on my suggestion the Calcutta woman had sent to this same dealer for some canvas and tenting materials. Here again we have a sexual factor giving affect value to accompanying objectives and furnishing an element of unification between objectives that are not usually connected with one another. Now also we can see the similarity of my emotional tones associated with Abercrombie the civil engineer of my Mexican days, and Abercrombie & Co. the tent maker.

Iroquoi. Here-from I secured some reminiscences of frontier work while I lived in tents in Dakota Territory, Iowa and Idaho. In each of these places I saw some Indians. The dominating picture relates to an experience in Idaho among the Black-foot Indians. This was about my twentieth year when the pubescent turmoil was at its height. I had seen a good looking young squaw around one of the wigwams and I became conscious of a desire to copulate with her. Here we see again the erotic factor furnishing a closer subjective element of unification between objectives that had some similarities of their own.

Smart Set. First I thought of the magazine by that name then of the "fast set" in "good society" to whom I feel that it caters. This again brought me to my student days. When not engaged in railroad surveying or in lonely hunting trips of hundreds of miles on horseback, nor in the joys of being a box car tramp, I would return to the University. My wanderlust and the wilds had brought me no satisfactory sex mate. So I came back to the University. Here I worked out the other side of my conflict, by trying to be a "dude," by trying to be of the "smart set" as I imagined them. At times I fancied that I had almost broken into the "swell, fast set." Here was the antithesis of the box car tramp in phantasy and conduct. From the Wigwam I turned to the "palace" of the smart set, but still looking only half consciously for the ideal and safe squaw. At that time I would probably have denied all this quite vehemently, if accused of it. Had any one then told me that by psychoanalytic methods my lie could be detected I would doubtless have found an argument to prove to my satisfaction that there was little truth or virtue in psychanalysis or its theories. Organic conditions within

me, and the immediate objective stimulus would be accepted as an adequate explanation because I was unwilling to admit that these had once produced conscious erotic phantasies, and unwilling to admit that these are still working.

Hangman. This reminded me of a lawful hanging that I witnessed while still a University student. My nearest relationship to the "smart set" came through my joining a college fraternity. During a little "frat blowout" in Chicago, I met a member of my college fraternity who was employed in the office of the sheriff of Cook County. It was through him that I received a pass to witness the hanging. Here again we see the erotic interests of adolescence furnishing a subjective element of unification connecting words possessing no objective connection in themselves.

Nice Lice. This brought to mind a camp of railroad graders on the south shore of Lake Superior. I was again employed in the engineering department. The bunk houses of the laborers were very lousy. It was reported that at times a man would put his hand within his shirt, scrape as many lice as possible from his body and offer to bet that he had pulled out more than 50 lice on his hand. The mess-hall where these men were fed had among its assistants a daughter of the proprietor. This young woman was about as fine a specimen of physical womanhood as I had then seen. Of course, I entertained erotic phantasies about her. I thought of her as an extremely handsome (nice) female in a very lousy environment.

Porcelain. This brings to my mind some porcelain in the house where resides the woman whose penmanship initiated this chain of associations and who also is physically a handsome woman. I have already said that I have entertained an erotic interest in her. Here also we get a suggestion of the conflict between the love of freedom that impelled me to the grader's camp, where only tin dishes were used and the china associated with the social life of the smart set.

Magruder. This word bring me no associations. From the viewpoint of understanding my own psychology it therefore should be accounted as the most important word in the group. I say this because of the possibility that it is a distorted symbol for some experience that was at the time more shameful than the rest, and on that account may have been buried more deep among the forgotten unpleasantnesses of the past.

Possum. This takes me back to college days when with other students I frequently sang a possum "coon song," at

midnight and around the girls dormitory. Also with the social life of my college fraternity.—All this again brings out the love of snobbery, which was the other aspect of the conflict which also made the young squaw and the waitress of a grader's camp seem attractive.

Calcimine. This reminds me of a room in the dwelling place of the woman whose handwriting stimulated this series of associations. The room was streakedly calcimined by an unskilled workman, and it was a sleeping room. Again we have the obvious erotic emotional tone as an associate.

THE PSYCHOANALYTIC VIEWPOINT

Now let us ponder a little over this group of associations. Obviously if I had looked only to the import of these words as they are defined in a dictionary, and as they symbolized things objective to myself, then everything said by the opponents of psychoanalysis would appear to be perfectly true. All these criticisms may possibly be equally true if you take into account the import of the original word-associations treated as symbols of something in the subjectivity of every person on earth except myself. But the whole situation changes as soon as we contemplate their possible significance as symbols of something of emotional value in my own psyche, the product of my own past life. This includes my concepts and feelings as being themselves symbolic of objective things. Now the words I wrote upon the paper become symbols of my subjective symbolization of objectives. From this viewpoint we are dealing with the more intimate aspects of psychology. If now you think of these words as symbolizing my subjective symbolization of the objective realities then they have a new and special significance (a latent content if you please) which is my exclusive property, dependent upon my own past experience in association with them. These experiences and their effect upon my psyche are necessarily unlike the experiences and effects within every other person who may be tempted to use these same word symbols. It is this personal meaning and the peculiarly personal valuation of the words that must be sought for if we are seeking to understand the psychoanalytic theory.

For the psychoanalysts, no one has an adequate grasp of the psychologic viewpoint who sees such associations only according to the acquired meaning of words as symbolizing something objective to those who use them. The psychoanalytic viewpoint requires us to consider these words, all

words in fact, as symbols of symbols; that is to say, as symbolizing the subjective symbolization of related objectives. So we find their genetic meaning in the past experience as explanatory of the present choice of those who use them.

It is because the critics of psychoanalysis have not generally acquired the habit of seeing psychoanalytic work and theories from this more purely psychologic viewpoint that they so often seem to the psychoanalyst to be discussing something quite irrelevant to that which he wishes to debate. The psyche of each observer establishes a point of contact, a relational existence between the stimulus in the environment of the present and the subjective record of the environment of the past. The psychoanalyst is primarily concerned with the latter aspects of this related existence. His critics seem mostly concerned with the other aspect of this same related existence. In so far as this is true they are obviously not discussing the same data. In one sense it may be said that the psychoanalyst is essentially a behaviorist. But here again the same possibilities of controversy exist; the psychoanalyst is not very much concerned with the outward and visible aspects of behavior, except as symptoms. His task is to understand the more subjective aspects of behavior, especially in relation to their origin in the past, and the mental and emotional mechanisms by which that past becomes an efficient element toward determining the present reactions to stimuli.

THE DREAM'S LATENT CONTENT

Let us now suppose that instead of writing these associated words I had immediately gone to sleep under the influence of the handwriting stimulus. From some considerable study of my own dream formation as well as those of others, it seems quite possible that instead of these associated words as visual images of penmanship there might (and probably would) have appeared a succession of phantasies something like this: A tent maker is seen in the streets of Calcutta and there comes along an Iroquois Indian followed by a possum. They stop in front of a strangely calcimated house of the aristocracy; or was it a house of prostitution? A handsome woman comes out and on a beautiful porcelain plate passed around some lice. Assuming now that the same impulses which actually produced the written words had instead thereof produced some such dream phantasy, then the association process would have led to the same group of past experiences as were brought out by the associated words.

Under these circumstances surely it would not be too great an abuse of words, to say that the separate, fleeting and incomplete parts of the dream phantasy each symbolized *for the dreamer* the more complete experience of the past, just as did the written words. From this past experience the present stimulus has brought into consciousness only such a fragment as perhaps was the focal point in the past emotional experience with the objective associate, or that best served the purpose of disguise for unpleasant factors, all these being connected in the past by feeling tones similar to those now stirred into subconscious or conscious activity by the stimulus of the present.

Again: The remainder of the past experience, not presented in the dream phantasy or necessarily implied in the associated word, can later be brought into the surface of consciousness by the further concentration of attention on that which is already present in consciousness. The result is expressed as "free associations." So more and more of the past is brought into the consciousness of the present. In its reductive aspects psychoanalysis consists largely in an efficient and elaborate technique for accomplishing that end, and exhibiting the influence of that past in the conduct of the present. It does not seem to me that it is a great abuse of language to describe this supplemental material of the free association process as the "latent content" of the dream symbolism.

Of course the professional psychiatrist will see in this narrative of mine much more than the mere words reveal. In all of my associations I have again evinced a choice just as certainly predetermined by the remainder of my past as was the choice of the original group of words predetermined. By a sufficient succession of free associations, applied in virtue of the similar psychologic imperatives and mechanisms, the whole of my past life could be revealed.

THE CRITICS OF PSYCHANALYSIS

In thus describing one incident in the behavior of my own psyche there has been presented a partial picture of the processes of reverie and dream formation. This is only an illustration, not a demonstration of the theory within which it might receive general formulation. The professional analyst after acquiring a close view of very, very many such psychic mechanisms, the processes of dream formation, their symbolisms, latent content and subsequent elaboration, is perhaps better qualified than most of his critics, to formulate

a theory of intellectual and emotional mechanisms, even though he cannot secure the space for reproducing all the materials acquired from scores of patients. Of course it is quite true that much of the misunderstanding about psychoanalysis is due to the analysts' shortcomings as controversialists. This in turn is partly due to the fact that their literary output is mainly prepared to appeal to their own group and not addressed primarily or adequately to the mental attitude of emotional opponents. For reasons obvious to the psychoanalyst his literary output does not easily adapt itself to overcoming the emotional resistances of critics.

Right here, it seems to me, is the place for making another criticism upon the more emotional of the critics of psychoanalysts. It is a complaint against the critic's unscientific attitude toward the whole subject; so obviously unscientific that the analyst would be perplexed to explain it had he not found scores of similar resistances among his patients. Let me try to state this with the special purpose of making it plain to those who are most in need of being corrected.

We may imagine one coming to a chemist and announcing a very new process for transmuting copper into gold. The innovator with many competent chemists as sponsors challenges investigation. What would an open-minded but doubting chemist with the best scientific spirit do by way of investigating the new theory and method? Obviously he would bring a piece of pure copper and other required chemicals of his own selection, and with the greatest care possible he would follow all the directions given and then from an examination of the product of that experiment he would determine whether gold had been made from copper.

The most vehement and most facetious critics of the psychoanalysts are those who have refused to go to the laboratory and have refused to bring their own piece of copper for the purpose of duplicating the psychoanalytic experiment. In this latter case the copper is his own psyche, the necessary chemicals his own past experience. The critics of psychoanalysis are not meeting the challenge to bring their own psyche and give an aggressive coöperation for its analysis. When they have done this and so have made the best possible exertion to see if the psychic energy behaves as reported by the psychoanalyst, then he is qualified as a critic. Strange to say, none of those who fundamentally disagree with the psychoanalysts have ever submitted to the test of an adequate expert analysis as a qualification for criticism.

Those who have acquired a close-range view of the ma-

chinery of their own psyche are thereby better qualified for the understanding of the psychic mechanisms operating in others. As between psychoanalysts it is a general truth that relative efficiency depends mainly upon the thoroughness of the analysis to which they have first submitted themselves, and the quantity, diversity, and complexity of cultural material which has been integrated with their psychologic intelligence. In so far as they have not acquired an objective view of the behavior of their own psyche, to the same extent will they be unable to achieve a clear understanding of their analytic subjects. In such circumstances and to that extent will they read their own misunderstandings of themselves into others. Thus many become failures as professional analysts. This is a commonplace among psychoanalysts. The critics of psychoanalysis lack a similar understanding of this same limitation operating in themselves.

The progressive clarification and formulation of psychologic theory on the basis of the revelation made to the psychoanalyst is still in the making. Here there is much room for discussion and criticism by those who can give sympathetic understanding, and who will remember that for psychologic disputes, words should be usually understood as the symbolizing of our mental symbols of objective realities, and not as direct and immediate symbols of those objectives. Critics who combine these two qualifications will be of great help to the advancement of scientific knowledge from the viewpoint of the psychoanalyst. Even psychoanalysts at times fail to keep this distinction in consciousness. To the extent that this is so they classify themselves among the relatively inefficient discussers of psychologic theories. With the critics of psychoanalysis this more intimate psychologic viewpoint is quite commonly overlooked. When that is the case the critic is not debating that in which the psychoanalyst is most interested, and the discussion is irrelevant.